

From a Woman Doctor's point of view

Some Notes on Personal Hygiene for Women

BY A LEADING WOMAN DOCTOR



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INTRODUCTION

There is a state of health which is expressed by the word "contentment." When a woman is interested in herself and is of service to someone, she may be called a happy woman. Remember that whilst self absorption is a sign either of stupidity or neurosis, every woman should be interested in herself to the extent of making the best of her looks and of her general personality.

The first essential of "good looks" is, as most men would agree, cleanliness. When this is combined with tidiness and good taste, there emerges the woman with attraction, which is the first cousin of charm. Let us deal with cleanliness and charm first of all. This twentieth century is the era of hygiene, the outcome of civilisation. When the world was young, woman was content with decorating herself with woad and beads ; in later times with clothes and more sophisticated jewellery ; but it is only within recent times that cleanliness was achieved to mark the beginning of a new type of woman and girl. The bewigged and powdered ladies of the Georgian era were superseded by the not-much-more hygienic Victorian dame, in high-necked long-sleeved trailing apparel, who seemed quite happy without baths !

Cleanliness as we know it to-day is a product of the last quarter of a century. The modern bathroom used by modern youth is considered more important than a drawing room. "Come and see my bathroom," say one's friends who have moved into new flats and houses. The bathroom, with its lovely glass shelves and toilet accessories is of enormous importance to-day. Why ? Because, in the nineteen-thirties, cleanliness is fashionable.

Smart women spend more on soaps and lotions, and up-to-date toilet preparations for the skin, than they have done before. The hair must be clean and shiny before ever it is waved, the nails also are manicured and treated in what our grandmothers would have considered amazing fashion.

Even more important is the cleanliness of teeth, because as everybody knows to-day, teeth are dependent for their beauty—their very existence—on two factors—the right sort of diet and cleanliness. Without efficient cleanliness and clearing of microbes, the teeth will decay twenty years earlier than they need.

But that is not all. The modern woman takes care that every part of her body shall be fresh and sweet. And she does this, not by covering it up with perfumes—but in the healthy, intelligent way. She has her own personal antiseptic. Its choice is an extremely important matter. Weak antiseptics are

useless. Powerful antiseptics may burn and corrode the delicate membrane, and harm the sensitive skin.

Fortunately, there is Milton, the perfect antiseptic for intimate personal use. And it is Milton that the up-to-date woman uses. It is non-poisonous and it can be used with complete safety either internally or externally. It kills all germs and banishes all unpleasant odours—at once.

If one could imagine perfect hygiene within and without to-day, one might envisage a woman of sixty with lovely teeth, skin, hair and figure who would appear in age just mature, like a well-preserved woman of forty to-day. Our grand-daughters will achieve it, but the knowledge of how to do it is available to-day.

There is cleanliness. There is diet and there is exercise. Sunlight is the source of life and health. From the spectrum, ultra-violet and infra-red rays are utilised as health rays, and water-bathing and sun-bathing are amongst the sensible crazes of the moment. They are the healthful methods used to-day in this new cleanliness-minded generation.

THE HEALTHY WOMAN'S DAILY ROUTINE

The intelligent woman rises early in time to do justice to herself. She spends four minutes on exercises and deep breathing. Whilst the bath is running there are certain things to do.

THE TEETH AND MOUTH

First, thorough scrubbing of teeth and gums with a firm brush and any good dentifrice, such as Milton toothpaste. Then there is the very important rinsing of the mouth with cold water to which has been added Milton in the strength of half a teaspoonful to a tumbler of cold water. Use this as a gargle, also. Many illnesses start with microbic infection of the throat which daily gargling can check.

A nasal douche of Milton and water should be part of the morning and evening toilet, and would prevent many thousand cases of that dangerous and unpleasant disease we call "cold in the head."

In cases where the nasal passages are ultra-sensitive, the following mixture has been found to be peculiarly useful and non-irritant : with one pint of water mix two teaspoonfuls of Milton, one teaspoonful of Bicarbonate of Soda, two tea-

spoonfuls of Glycerine. Use small quantities as desired, warming slightly before use.

Let me warn you never to neglect catarrh. The infection, if neglected, may spread up the Eustachian tubes to the middle ear and cause deafness. The hands and nails may be scrubbed with Milton diluted, but it is better perhaps to add Milton to the bath.

PERSPIRATION ODOURS

Milton is the best thing to prevent body odour, which is a trial to many girls—and does not make for popularity with one's neighbours or in the office. I can recall more than one occasion when girls have come to me because their jobs were in jeopardy over this very point. They had been careless—their superiors had had the very unpleasant task of telling them. So do be sure to keep yourself always above suspicion. The best way is to put Milton full strength under your armpits and let it dry in. Milton is a rapid and efficient deodorant because it destroys the odour instead of covering it up. And it cannot harm the most sensitive skin.

The soles of the feet and between the toes can be wiped with cotton wool soaked in Milton. This toilet item of the feet and armpits takes less than two minutes and it would be difficult to overestimate the comfort and cleanliness achieved for the day.

CARE OF THE EYES

The modern girl uses an eyebath to cleanse the delicate mucous membranes of the eyes and the lashes. Two drops of Milton are added to the glass eyebath filled with tepid water. *Stronger solutions of Milton should not be used for the eyes in any circumstances.* This is fixed over the eye and the head tilted backwards whilst the eyelids are flicked open rapidly seven times. The cleansing and protective lotion is thus able to reach the conjunctiva and the mucous membrane lining the eyelids. Milton should be used in the same way after motoring in an open car, or after exposure to cold winds or bright sunlight. When the eyes are tired after reading or working, a Milton eyebath acts like a charm.

CARE OF THE SKIN

I am not personally in favour of women using a great deal of cosmetics on the face. I think a clear healthy skin is best achieved by washing with water once daily very thoroughly. At other times, cleansing should be done with milk, which is one of the best cosmetics. One halfpennyworth of milk to which is added three drops of Milton every morning will help to keep the skin soft and free from pimples.

PIMPLES AND ACNE

Because modern women eat plenty of vegetables and fruit, and go in for vigorous exercise, one rarely sees pimples due to acne—which was considered an almost inevitable affliction by most adolescent girls a generation ago. We know that acne is mainly due to auto-intoxication or self-poisoning. This may come from a septic tooth or unhealthy tonsils. But the commonest cause of self-poisoning is a sluggish, lazy bowel. The skin is trying to get rid of the poisons you are manufacturing. The moral is to remove the cause by making sure that the action of the bowel is regular. Meanwhile you can help the skin whilst it is recovering by application of Milton full strength. This should be applied to the centre of any pimple or spot by a tiny piece of cotton wool wrapped round the end of a wooden match, from which, of course, the live head has been removed.

The skin is the protective envelope of the body. If you bruise the skin of a peach or plum or pear, microbes enter and the fruit decays. So, also, bruising or cutting the skin permits the ubiquitous germs to enter the body and pass into the blood stream. A friend of mine who is a keen gardener and who dislikes to work in gloves tells me that she keeps a large bottle of diluted Milton in her toolshed and uses it for her hands if the skin gets bruised, and prefers to use pure Milton to Iodine when pricks and little scratches from her roses make her fingers bleed.

These are some of the uses of Milton in everyday life, and now I want to write of its importance in certain special functions of womanhood.





"You must make it easy for your daughter to ask questions."

TELLING YOUR DAUGHTER

Are you as a mother, a little apprehensive about the approach of your young daughter to puberty? Should you or should you not prepare her for the onset of menstruation as early as eleven or twelve years of age? Of course, you must talk to her early and frankly about sex . . . about what in old days they spoke of as "the facts of life" in hushed and self-conscious voices.

The modern mother talks frankly to her child, without any false modesty. She answers the child's questions—where babies and kittens and lambs in the fields "come from." You must give the information easily and pleasantly as you would explain any other fact of life from cooking a dinner to driving a motor car. You must make it easy for your daughter to ask questions.

If, in your family, the women mature early, say at twelve years of age, it is best to tell your daughter of ten years, that some day she will be no longer a girl, but a young woman. Tell her that there will be certain changes in her body, such as the enlargement of the breasts, the growth of hair above the pubic bones and in the armpits. And tell her that menstruation will take place.

It is obviously far better for her to become aware of these natural facts through you, than to hear them whispered by schoolmates, or servants, or in other unpleasant ways. A child brought up to think of sex as an ordinary natural thing is a happier, healthier child both mentally and physically.

Menstruation, also called "the period," is, as every woman knows, characterised by a discharge of blood from the vagina or front opening of the body persisting from puberty, which is the beginning of womanhood, to the end of the child-bearing age. The periods cease, of course, in pregnancy. You might explain to your daughter that the mother's blood is then retained for the nourishment and growth of the unborn child.

Explain to your child that the blood comes from the small capillaries, i.e., hair-like blood vessels in the lining membrane of the womb. These become congested once a month in association with the passing of an ovum or egg from an ovary to the womb. The vessel walls rupture and the blood flows from the womb through the vagina or passage.

A girl should be taught that it is particularly important to keep herself clean and fresh at her periods—not only for her health's sake, but so as not to offend other people. She cannot learn habits of bodily cleanliness too young. She should have a warm bath every day. Cold baths during menstruation are not

advocated. To remove all odours, a girl should be taught to sponge the parts once or twice daily with a teaspoonful of Milton to half a pint of water.

In certain illnesses—serious anaemia, for instance—the periods stop. But should anything of the kind happen to your daughter, the treatment is the province of the family doctor. He or she should always be consulted for anything out of the normal such as pain, excess of blood or cessation of menstruation. Thousands of girls suffer severely every month from pain that can and should be prevented.

CARE AT THE MONTHLY PERIOD

During this monthly period, most women feel a little self-conscious. In a word, not quite clean. At such times, soap and water is not enough, and Milton, as so many women know, proves an invaluable friend. If, after the bath, Milton is applied quarter strength to the skin and the parts, all danger of unpleasant odours is removed. Your person will be absolutely inoffensive all day. You will find a Milton douche *at the end of the period* comforting and cleansing. Use a teaspoonful of Milton to half a pint of tepid water. Milton will tone and clean the vaginal membrane. It promotes the rapid removal and replacement of dead cells, and hastens the healing of any small injuries to the membrane.

Milton, the best antiseptic up-to-date, will ensure a cleanliness that may be termed hygienic. It is a powerful germicide—which means that it destroys germs. At the same time it is not dangerous. It does not harden the cells and membranes. The fluids of your body are largely composed of albuminous matter, the same material as white of egg. If you add carbolic acid or iodine to a little white of egg in a spoon, it curdles and thickens. Add Milton and you will liquefy this sticky albuminous substance so that it can be easily poured away. Think of the same thing happening in the orifices of the body, the vagina and the intestinal tract.

WHEN TROUBLES DEVELOP

In the case of any yellow discharge, especially if stained with blood, it is wise and necessary to consult a doctor, as it may indicate ulceration or other womb trouble. A white discharge is normal, but if this is excessive it is called leucorrhoea or Whites, and it is most apparent just before and after the period. Sponging with Milton mitigates any odour at this time. The mucous membrane of the vagina and the labia or lips around the orifice may get infected by decomposition of fluids or fatty substances secreted by glands in this part. Germs acting upon the fluids or secretions cause a strong odour, which is unpleasant in many

women, and cleansing with cotton wool and Milton half strength, or sitting in a basin of warm water and Milton, will have an anti-septic and deodorant effect. A teaspoonful to half a pint of water is the proper strength for a lotion that is to be applied to any mucous membrane. This is the strength for douching, but in my opinion douching should not be undertaken without first asking a doctor.

The greatest care should be exercised in keeping the douche-can, rubber tube and glass or vulcanite nozzle clean. Wash them regularly with Milton in the strength of two tablespoonfuls to a pint of hot water. A rubber Higginson's Syringe is easily packed if you have to travel about and it should be washed with Milton solution and carefully dried to prevent the rubber from perishing. Milton is invaluable in hot climates or in long train journeys across Europe, America and the East, for cleansing purposes of all kinds, more especially for sterilizing any drinking water. There are few countries in which ample supplies of pure water are available, as in our Home Country.



THE CHANGE OF LIFE

Many of the traditional bogeys which frightened women in the past have been dispelled by knowledge, but not all. Even in these enlightened days one meets women with vague fears of what may happen to them at the change of life. "I have never been the same since the change," a woman sometimes declares. "Oh, she is at the change of life" is a phrase used to explain the hysteria of a neurotic woman who is "difficult" in her home from uncontrolled emotions or some physical ill which has nothing to do with the menopause.

With greater knowledge of medicine and science, fear can be dispelled from the mind, and after the change of life, women can look forward to years of mental and physical good health. The greater emotionalism of some women in the late forties and early fifties can be explained by the changes which take place in the body at this time. Ova or eggs for new life are no longer expelled from the ovaries, so menstruation ceases and the reproductive organs shrivel to some extent.

The flushings or heat waves which are usual at this time are due to vascular changes, that is, alteration of the blood vessels and circulatory system. The blood vessels of the pelvis, for instance, no longer carry the same quantity of blood to the womb when the menstrual flow comes to an end. Let women remember that any discomforts will pass as the new decade of life becomes stabilised. Many women have said that they had never felt so well in mind and body as during the years when they had passed the climacteric.

We are well or ill to some extent from auto-suggestion. If a woman says to herself "I am at a critical time, that is why I feel irritable and why I have indigestion and sleep badly," she will certainly go downhill and suffer in her looks and personality. But, is it necessary? A woman who is having a baby takes certain hygienic precautions. She avoids crowds and late hours. She accepts certain physical disabilities and aches. So also at the change of life a woman cannot expect for a few months, or even a year, to feel so much at ease mentally or physically as when she was twenty-five.

She should say to herself, as the expectant mother should say, "This will pass. These flushings, and that slight irritability are temporary troubles. It is, of course, wise to attend to diet, exercise, fresh air, good sleep. I will do so, and I *will not* worry."

A daily douche is useful and necessary if there is a discharge. If there happens to be itching, i.e., Pruritus, round the anus or vaginal orifice, the parts should be sponged twice daily with

Milton, a tablespoonful to a half-pint of tepid water. If, as sometimes happens, there is bowel irritability—a mild colitis—three pints of water at blood heat—98.4°—containing three teaspoonfuls of Milton makes an excellent lavage. This should be allowed to flow gently into the bowel and the fluid retained if possible for ten minutes.

On the other hand, self-doctoring should be avoided. Any signs such as excessive bleeding or unhealthy vaginal discharge or symptoms like severe headaches, sleeplessness, backache, should be reported to the doctor. Indeed, a consultation provides an opportunity for friendly talk and advice about other things besides physical health from which most women at the change of life would benefit. The doctor will also advise on whether to douche, and how frequently ; and how constipation—a common cause of trouble at any phase of life—should be dealt with. Piles may be troublesome and require medical treatment. Discomfort of external piles is alleviated by applying Milton—two teaspoonfuls to a half-pint of water. After the bowels act, cotton wool should be used instead of paper for wiping and drying.

The middle-aged woman should be very particular about her toilet. She is more apt to suffer from perspiration, of the armpits and feet especially. She should use Milton full strength as a deodorant regularly. Indigestion or constipation may account for bad breath. This must be dealt with, and the mouth rinsed several times daily with weak Milton solution. The woman who has the time and opportunity should bathe twice daily, in the morning and before the evening meal.



MARRIAGE AND MOTHERHOOD

A married woman should take twice as much care with her personal hygiene as she did when she was single. She is now living in the closest possible physical contact with another human being. Men approve of cleanliness. If you are careful to keep yourself always fresh and dainty, there is no one who will appreciate it more than your husband. So attend to perspiration odours. Use Milton regularly. And be scrupulous at your periods too, so that you give no cause for offence. A wife who is nice about her person will keep her husband's love—while a woman who is careless, especially if she is married to a sensitive man—will often lose it.

Milton is of considerable value both before and after you have a baby. For a few weeks after childbirth, the doctor in charge may require the maternity nurse to use certain douches which he will himself prescribe. When you are up and resume your daily life, douching may be continued for a time as it makes for comfort and cleanliness. A tablespoonful of Milton to a pint of warm water is reliable and safe. For the sake of the family, the children as well as the mother, it is necessary to space the family. I mean, a mother should not become pregnant again until the new baby is at least eighteen months or two years old. The doctor will recommend the best method of preventing conception, and if a douche is to be used, Milton is excellent.

IN THE NURSERY

In the nursery where bites, stings, scratches, bruises and rashes are not unusual, a bottle of Milton should always be kept in the nursery cupboard. Milton is non-poisonous. It will never burn or hurt a baby's skin. For baby's bath, one tablespoonful to every quart of water, purifies the water and alleviates any skin irritation, especially in hot weather. Milton antiseptic ointment is excellent for irritation of baby's skin and scalp. A tablespoonful of Milton to every quart of water should be used for rinsing baby's napkins. It will take away all the unpleasantness of washing.

I would like to remind you here that you cannot be too careful about making sure that baby's feeding bottles are perfectly clean. A feeding bottle, with particles of old milk or any kind of dirt in it, is frequently the cause of upset in baby's health, of enteritis or infant cholera. So be extra careful. Wash out the bottle after each feed, with three teaspoonfuls of Milton to one pint of

warm water. Then you know it's safe. Do not wash with fresh water afterwards. Milton leaves no taste at all, and cannot hurt the milk—in fact, Milton will help to sterilise the milk and keep it sweet.

Children love pets in the nursery and they have a psychological value in child training. But, if animals are to be allowed in the nursery, you should make sure that they are clean and do not carry any infection. Send for the special booklet of instructions for the uses of "Milton for Animals" if you have dog, cat, or birds in your home,

More and more girls of the educated classes are taking up the work of Nursery Nurse and associating themselves with Child Care and Training. There is nothing more valuable in this respect than a thorough knowledge of how to use Milton in the nursery.

WHAT OF THE FUTURE?

I do hope when you have read this book through, you will not throw it aside and forget about it. The matters I have been talking about are of the greatest importance both to your health and your looks, and to the impression you make on other people. If you are a young woman, you will perhaps find it difficult to imagine that you will one day reach the age of forty or fifty years old. But let me tell you this. When you do reach that age, you will want to be attractive—just as you are to-day. And whether you are or not depends very largely on whether you are going to become cleanliness-minded, and go in whole-heartedly for careful personal hygiene.

So don't spend all your time thinking about beauty preparations—having your hair waved and all the outward signs of beauty. Instead, lay the foundations of beauty that lasts. Take care of your body in the ways I have suggested. Take exercise. And don't be greedy about what you eat and drink.

The bloom of maturity can be yours—if you will only take a little care. And how glad you'll be if you do! Do not neglect such signs of trouble as a tendency to nasal discharge, blotchy skin, any body odour however slight. Germs are more likely to attack the tissues when you are no longer young and are less resistant to microbic attack.

That tired feeling and lassitude which so many women complain about after forty-five can be avoided. Think of the future therefore and be hygienic and cleanliness-minded. Young women have a splendid heritage to-day. You have knowledge

that ensures long life, health and good looks up till old age—except that the words “old age” need never be applied to the woman who knows how to live and work and take sensible care of herself and her looks. A man, it has been said, is as old as his arteries. A woman is as old as her skin and epidermal appendages—and her figure, of course. So when you are young, be sensible and safeguard your beauty. Your skin is porous and absorbent. Thousands and tens of thousands of glands (perspiration glands, sebaceous or oily glands) open on to its surface. Keep it clear of germs, scales, dead cells and secretions.

Milton is your best friend—your opportunity for achieving and retaining that sense of freshness which means health and charm—the cleanliness which is the slogan of to-day. The sloppy, careless, not quite clean, “temperamental” girl is out-of-date. When one is up-to-date, and in harmony with the mental outlook and physical culture movements of the day, opportunities are never neglected and happy successful living is assured.

Let me appeal therefore, to the women and girls of these times. Let me advise you to organise an active plan of hygienic living. Ask yourself a few questions.

- (1) Am I perfectly clean in my body ?
- (2) Is my skin up to a first-class standard, as fine as I can make it ?
- (3) Is my hair quite clean, the scalp free from scurf ?
- (4) Is any body odour apparent to myself or others ?
- (5) Have I learned the technique of medical cleanliness at my monthly periods ?
- (6) What more can I do to improve myself ?

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